

New law retains existing law that creates the Atchafalaya Trace Commission as an agency within the Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism and establishes the Atchafalaya Trace Heritage Corridor area (the trace area). New law retains provision that the trace corridor boundaries shall be as depicted on the "Atchafalaya Trace Heritage Corridor Concept Plan" map copyrighted by the Center for Landscape Interpretation.

New law retains existing law that provides that the purposes of the commission include:

(1) To protect the nature of the Atchafalaya Basin.

(2) To promote nature-based, scenic, and cultural tourism.

New law adds promotion of historic and other forms of heritage tourism to the purposes of the commission.

(3) To identify, strengthen, and link "gateway communities" surrounding the Atchafalaya Basin.

(4) To improve transportation facilities and access.

New law adds improving communications facilities to the purposes of the commission.

(5) To further develop family-oriented recreational facilities.

(6) To preserve, enhance, and protect archaeological and historical sites and structures, architectural heritage, and cultural events, traditions, and lifeways.

New law adds interpretation to purposes of the commission.

(7) To communicate the unique maritime cultural history of the basin and Atchafalaya Bay.

(8) To develop environmental awareness and educational programs.

(9) To seek recognition and federal funding for the trace area as a National Heritage Corridor.

(10) To recognize and interpret the unique contributions to the regional landscape of the oil and gas, marine and maritime, fishing and aquaculture, sugarcane, and cypress timber industries.

(11) To promote and market the region.

(12) To stimulate the development of overnight accommodations and conveniences.

New law adds promoting research and scholarly activities regarding the region's resources, economy, and lifeways to the commission's purposes.

Prior law required that the commission assist other governmental entities in the development and implementation of an integrated natural, scenic, and cultural resource management plan for the corridor area.

New law provides that the commission develop such plan and assist other

governmental entities in its implementation.

Prior law provided for commission membership as follows:

- (1) The governor of Louisiana or his delegate.
- (2) Six individuals representing and appointed, one each, by the following Louisiana departments: Natural Resources; Culture, Recreation and Tourism; Economic Development; Transportation and Development; Agriculture and Forestry; and Wildlife and Fisheries.
- (3) One representative from the Atchafalaya Basin Levee Board.
- (4) Thirteen representatives from local governments, one representative for each parish, including St. Mary, Iberia, St. Martin, St. Landry, Avoyelles, Pointe Coupee, Iberville, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafayette, West Baton Rouge, Concordia, and East Baton Rouge parishes, appointed by parish governing authority.
- (5) Thirteen individuals from the general public or interest groups who are citizens of the state who shall have knowledge and experience in appropriate fields of interest relating to the preservation, use, management, and interpretation of the trace area, to include one member from each of the following: The Sierra Club, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, the Louisiana Audubon Council, the Nature Conservancy, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, and at least two representatives from tribal governments.
- (6) Three representatives of federal government; one each appointed by and representing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service.
- (7) One member appointed by and representing the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Prior law additionally authorized any organization with the purpose of preserving and promoting the heritage of the Atchafalaya Basin and which demonstrated such interest to the executive committee of the commission to appoint one member. Provided for the selection of an executive board consisting of not more than one member from each parish which is part of the commission.

New law provides that the commission shall consist of 13 members, one appointed by the governing authority of each parish in the trace area. Creates an advisory board. Includes no provision for the creation of an executive board of the commission. Provides that the advisory board shall be comprised similarly to how the commission was comprised under prior law. Authorizes the secretary of the Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism to identify other groups for representation on the advisory board. Requires that the commission meet at least quarterly with the advisory board.

New law retains existing law that provides that the duties and authority of the commission shall include:

- (1) To establish an office in the region.
- (2) To appoint and fix compensation of staff subject to provisions of law governing employees of CRT.
- (3) To hold such hearings, and act at such times and places, and receive

such evidence as the commission considers appropriate.

New law removed prior law that prohibited the commission from issuing subpoenas or exercising any subpoena authority.

- (4) To use its funds to obtain matching funds.
- (5) To seek, accept, and dispose of gifts, bequests, or donations of money, personal property, or services, from any source.
- (6) Prior law authorized the commission to acquire real property or interest in real property in the trace area with money which was given or bequeathed to the commission on the condition that the money would be used for such acquisition. Required the conveyance of such property or interest to an appropriate public agency or public interest group.

New law authorizes acquisition of real property or interest in real property for any lawful purpose without limitation on what funds may be used for such purpose. Authorizes conveyance to an appropriate public agency or public interest group.

- (7) To enter into cooperative agreements with the state, any political subdivision, or with any person for the purposes of carrying out the plan as provided by new law.
- (8) To establish such advisory groups as it deems necessary.

Prior law provided that the commission's duties and authority were to be carried out through its executive board. Granted the board rulemaking power to carry out prior law. New law provides that the commission's duties and authority shall be carried out with the advice of the advisory board. Grants the commission rulemaking power to implement the law.

Existing law authorizes, upon request of the commission, the head of any federal or state agency to detail, on a reimbursable basis, personnel of such agency to the commission. Authorizes the commission to accept the services of personnel detailed from the state and any political subdivision thereof, and to reimburse the state or such political subdivision for those services.

Prior law required that the secretary of CRT provide to the commission, on a reimbursable basis, such administrative support services as requested by the commission.

New law requires that such service be provided on such basis as may be required.

Prior law required that the commission prepare a feasibility study within six months after full funding.

New law requires preparation of a concept plan and feasibility study with no specified time period for completion. Provides that such plan and study shall guide the commission's operations and aid in the preparation of the management plan provided for by existing law.

New law retains existing law that provides that the plan and study shall:

- (1) Identify the commission as the management entity for the trace area and describe the organization, structure, people, programs, capabilities, and funding necessary and desirable for implementing the purposes of

existing law.

- (2) Discuss the commission's vision, mission, goals, roles, responsibilities, and objectives.

New law provides that such discussion shall be as related to strategic planning.

- (3) Determine the potential for the trace area to become a nationally recognized heritage area.
- (4) Identify, inventory, map, and describe the region's resources.
- (5) Delineate the tentative boundaries of the heritage area.
- (6) Prior law required that the feasibility study define the trace corridor loop.

New law requires that the concept plan define the Atchafalaya Trace heritage driving corridor or scenic byway.

- (7) Outline resource conservation and development measures.
- (8) List partners and their commitments.
- (9) Describe tentative management measures.

New law adds determination of immediate project needs to such plan and study.

New law retains existing law that requires that the commission develop a management plan for the trace area.

Prior law required completion of the management plan within two years after its first meeting.

New law allows four years for completion of such plan.

New law retains existing law requirement that the commission submit the plan to the House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources.

New law requires such submission through the secretary of the Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

New law retains existing law that provides that the management plan shall:

- (1) Provide an inventory of property in the trace area which should be preserved, restored, managed, developed, maintained, or acquired.
- (2) Develop a historic interpretation plan.

New law requires that the interpretation plan include cultural, scenic, and natural resource interpretation.

- (3) Recommend policies for resource management.
- (4) Detail the ways in which local, state, and federal programs may best be coordinated to promote the purposes of new law.

- (5) Contain a program for implementation of the plan.

New law adds provision that the management plan include estimates of the costs of implementation and a review of local government plans and projects.

New law retains existing law that provides that upon legislative approval of the management plan, the commission shall implement it by taking steps to preserve and interpret the historic resources of the trace area and support public and private economic revitalization efforts, including:

- (1) Assisting the state in preserving the trace area and its surrounding area.

New law includes assisting local and federal governments in such efforts.

- (2) Assisting the state and local governments in designing, establishing, and maintaining visitor centers and other interpretive exhibits.

New law includes assisting the federal government in such efforts.

- (3) Assisting in increasing public awareness of and appreciation for the natural and cultural resources and sites in the trace area.

New law includes historical and scenic resources and sites.

- (4) Assisting the state and local governments and nonprofit organizations in the restoration of any historic building in the trace area.

New law includes assisting the federal government in such efforts. Adds natural systems or features to things which the commission should help restore.

- (5) Encouraging enhanced economic development in the trace area consistent with the goals of the plan.

- (6) Ensuring that clear, consistent signs identifying access points and sites of interest are placed throughout the trace area.

New law includes the trace driving corridor or scenic byway and services for visitors as items which should be identified by signs.

New law adds assisting local governments in the development of comprehensive plans and projects to steps the commission may take to implement the management plan. Also provides for such implementation in cooperation with any public or private entity.

Prior law provided for termination of the commission within six years after the effective date of the enactment of existing law, except provided for an extension of up to six years if the commission determined (not later than 180 days prior to its termination date) that an additional period of not more than six years was necessary.

New law provides that the commission shall terminate 180 days after approval of the management plan unless the legislature, by resolution, authorizes the commission to function for up to six additional years.

Effective August 15, 1999.

(Amends R.S. 25:1222-1225 and R.S. 36:209(M) and 901(A); Adds R.S. 25:1223.1)